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others (see Pl. 4). Here the women work, cook, and gossip; the men may join them if they wish, except the boys wearing the *upi* (leaf hat connected with puberty ceremonies), to whom all that portion of the village is rigorously taboo.

The interior is alike in all. There are no dividing partitions. The floor is the bare earth, trodden hard. The only furniture is a row of broad planks propped up on small logs along one side of the hut, which serve as beds. Short lengths of bamboo are used as pillows. Between each plank is just space enough for a small fire. There is probably a place for roasting taro with the aid of hot stones, the native oven, at the farther end of the hut near the women's entrance. Cooking pots, the cleaned-out coco-nut shells used to store water, packs for carrying taro, and a few personal possessions, lie on the ground; sometimes a plank is laid across two poles to form a shelf on which such objects can be kept out of the way. Bundles containing more valuable property hang from the rafters, tied up in banana fibre or old loin-cloths. Every returned plantation hand is the proud possessor of a wooden box with lock and key, part of the kit which must be provided by the employer for each of his 'boys' when they 'sign on', which he displays in a prominent position. All sorts of treasures such as medicine bundles, knives, &c., are stowed away between the thatch and the supporting rafters. Nets and banana-fibre straps for carrying burdens hang over the cross-poles that form part of the framework of the hut, and there is usually a basket containing some pieces of cold taro in case any one feels hungry at a time when it is not convenient to cook.

As a rule, the household consists of father, mother, and children. In the case of polygynous marriages, each wife will usually have her own hut, particularly if she has children, and the husband distributes his company as he pleases, spending a certain amount of time with the woman who ranks as his chief wife, but most of it with the one who for the time being stands highest in favour. A wife who is old or incapacitated, or one whose children have all started out for themselves, will often share a hut with one of the other wives, not always amicably. In some of the Buka villages large huts are now built, housing all the wives of one man; the interior of these is partitioned off into rooms for each. An aged parent of either sex may also form part of the household, the taboo between mother-in-law and son-in-law being relaxed when the former is old.

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plantations as casuals, and a number of them did so intermittently, returning to the village to sleep.

The excess of boys over adolescent girls is explained by the fact that many of the girls were living with their prospective relatives-in-law in other villages, while the brides of the boys wearing the *upi* remained with their own people till after the *watawutʃ*.

One man has four wives, one has three, and five have two. One of these is a boy still wearing the *upi*, whose 'wives'—they are spoken of as such although the marriage rites have not been completed—do not yet live in the village, but pay short visits only.

Leaving out the 25 boys wearing the *upi*, and 4 men who sleep with them in the *tobār*, there are 107 individuals (72 adults and 35 children) living in 27 huts. The majority of huts have 3 or 4 inhabitants. The largest number sleeping, habitually, in the same hut is 7, which happens in 3 cases. One hut has a solitary occupant, an old widow, whose children are all dead.

THE DAILY ROUND

The village day begins at sunrise, with a leisurely stroll, during which frequent halts are made to enjoy the morning sun. It is not often that we wake to rain; that comes generally later in the day. The women take a briefer stroll, return home, and begin to rake together the ashes of the fire, probably still hot from having smouldered through the night. Soon the native Mission teacher blows the conch-shell which is the signal for Mass, and those who feel so inclined make their way to the church. (The church is beside the road, hidden by trees from the village, hence it does not appear in the plan. The villagers had just finished its construction when I came to live among them.) On their return, the women uncover the ovens in which taro has meanwhile been roasting, or they may boil some instead, or, if there is any over from yesterday, it may be eaten cold, together with any bits of fish or other relish that may be available. The men come along presently, the children are called up, and every one eats, but not a large meal. If the village is by the sea, some families will take their meal on to the beach and eat it round a fire kindled there. Then the women collect the scraps and call the pigs, who come on hearing their names. All now sit about for awhile, gossiping and making arrangements for the day.

The women presently pick up their knives and packs (made of

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II

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

THE FAMILY AND THE LINEAGE

A CHILD born into this community has for the most intimate companions of his babyhood the inmates of the hut in which he lives. These will be, normally, his mother, his father, and his full brothers and sisters, that is to say, his immediate 'family' in our sense of the word, with, possibly, the addition of a grandparent. Indeed, taking it by and large, the child's relations to those persons who constitute what may be called the kindred, i.e. his two parents and the near relatives of both of them, do not, in practice, differ very widely from those of our own children, except that his mother's brother possesses authority denied to our maternal uncles, and his mother's sister stands closer to him than any but the most devoted of our aunts. But there is no word in his dialect for this group of people, nor is this 'kindred' recognized as a structural unit, though in practice it behaves as such. The first group of people with which our Melanesian child will learn to associate himself officially consists of his mother and all her siblings, his mother's mother, if she be living, his own full brothers and sisters, and the children of all the women just mentioned, but not those of the men; in other words, those of his blood relations who are of the same clan, the clan always passing through the mother.

Following the example of Evans-Pritchard (1933, p. 30), I propose to call this group of people a *lineage*.[1] In the Petats dialect the word for it is *piniposa*, in the Kurtatchi dialect *boa*, usually heard with a suffixed possessive, e.g. *boanē*, my lineage. It must be borne in mind that this term excludes all blood relations on the father's side. For though the child is, throughout his early years and often throughout his life, thrown into close and intimate contact with his father and his father's brothers, sisters, and other relatives, they are regarded as bound to him by ties which might perhaps be called 'personal' rather than 'official'. For this reason, the white man's rule that descendants shall line up behind the father for census or inspection purposes is as puzzling to them as it would

[1] [while Murdock (American Anthropologist, vol. 59, 1957, p. 681) lists the Kurtatchi as having sibs, the definitions here would also include lineages in Murdock's sense. – Ed.]

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APPENDIX I

Description of part of plan of Kurtatchi

1. 'Long house' belonging to the *tsunaun*, Pinari, with its 'eye' (roofed porch open in front, used as a meeting-place for the men). In the house itself live:
   Gomar, now Pinari's chief wife (his first wife being dead).
   Ira, her daughter, married but not living with her husband.
   Rudi, infant still suckling, son of Gomar and Pinari.
   Busa, about 6, son of Pinari by a wife now dead.
   Kels, about 5, son of another dead wife of Pinari by her former husband.
   Sang, wife of Pinari recently taken over from his dead brother.
   Komul, another wife of Pinari, whose hut has not yet been brought over from Gomen.
2. Kwimau, wife of Pinari.
   Davril, aged about 6–7, and Togomen (suckling), her sons.
   Pinari divides his time between this hut and No. 1.
3. Pari, Pinari's widowed sister.
   Rus, young widow, daughter of Matĕv.
   Wanias, about 4, Rus's son.
4. Matĕv, widow, Pinari's 'sister' (actually his mother's sister's daughter).
   Kakari, her son, aged about 19–20.
   Waror, her daughter, aged about 7–8.
   Muben, Kakari's wife, aged 14–15.
   Before Kakari's marriage, Rus and Wanias lived here. When Kakari brought home his bride, they moved to No. 3. After the young couple had lived here for about six months, Matĕv told him he ought to build a hut for himself in the space to the left, but he had not made any attempt to do so when I left three months later.
5. Space intended for hut belonging to Komul, not yet brought over from Gomen. Komul meanwhile sleeps in No. 1.
6. Sobak, an elderly man.
   Tsonakets, his wife.
   Bawt, her sister, widow of a man of Hanahan, who came here to be near Tsonakets.
   Kabo, Omi, and Mĕbi, Bawt's three sons. Kabo is of an age to wear the *api*, but as this custom is not practised at Hanahan he has

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never put it on, and can therefore enter this hut if he wishes. He usually sleeps in the *tobar* with the other boys of his age. Omi and Mēbi are younger.

7. Space for hut belonging to Wasē, Pinari's son, not yet moved from Gomen. He and his family are at present living in No. 8.

8. Matarē, man belonging to Timputs, husband of
Marotē, Pinari's daughter by his first wife.
Hut at present shared with
Wasē, Marotē's brother, his two wives Takon and Tahol, and Tahol's son, Nomoin (suckling). (Takon has not reached puberty.)

9. Togen, brother of Matarē, husband of
Pesē, sister of Marotē.
Their daughter Gaua, aged about 5–6, and their son Gav (suckling).
Kikis, girl of about 9, whose parents are dead. Related to Pesē's mother. (Spends some of her time with her mother's people at Ieta.)
Hut at present shared with
Tchiriv, a protégé of Pinari's, and Tarubi his wife, who came from Ruri. At Gomen they lived with Komul. They were considering building a hut for themselves when I left Kurtatchi.

10. Wakos, widow of Krapen (son of Pasu and Pasis).
Bunakets, mother of Wakos, a very old woman.
Three daughters of Wakos, Laia, in her teens, married to a man away at work; Bios, aged 5–6, No, aged about 2.

11. Pasu, sister of Wanawatch, widow of Pasis, Pinari's mother's brother.
Gerigir, her son, and Kalo his wife (when she can be persuaded to stay here; often she goes back to her mother in another village).
Tapē, daughter of Pasu, married to a man away at work.
Tchub, recently become a widower, son of Pasu. (Often sleeps in the *tobar*, and began a hut (118) for himself shortly before I left, in which to set up a new household.) Has one young son, living with his dead wife's sister at Ruri.

12. Kio, wife of Wanawatch.
Puta, her daughter by a former husband.
Nok, aged 3–4, daughter of Kio and Wanawatch (died during my stay).
Pirier, husband of Puta.
Walala, daughter of Puta and Pirier (suckling).
Wawaus, first wife of Wanawatch, now blind.

13. Wanawatch (generally, occasionally at 12). Belongs to Baniu, came here to be near his sister Pasu.

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361 Tai'en, wife of Wanawatch, Gugum, their daughter (suckling).
Boles, about 5, daughter of Wanawatch and Wawaus.

● 592 14. Maravin, an old man living alone (he divorced his wife, who has since died). Some of the boys wearing the *upi* shared this hut till Maravin died, after which it was taken down to make room for the two *tobar* belonging to Gomen, which were erected shortly before I left, as shown by the dotted lines on the plan (a, b).

Huts 15–27 belong to the original village of Kurtatchi. Reference to people living in some of these has been made in other chapters of this book.

No. 28 is situated about a quarter of a mile away; it belongs to Ora (brother of Sobak), an old man who does not like to be with other people; with him live Tsonatchil, his wife, Towata, their daughter, widow of Boie, brother of Pinari, her two little children, and Diriwi, the daughter of Maravin, married to Gasagar (son of Ora and Tsonatchil), who still wears the *upi*. It is very seldom that any of these people are seen in the village, though they take part in community enterprises such as journeys for purposes of barter, &c.

Nos. 29, 30, and 31 are *tobar*, or men's houses, 29 belongs to the Nakarib boys, 30 and 31 to those of the clan Naboin. Pending the reconstruction of the two *tobar* (one for each clan) originally belonging to Gomen, those of the boys who did not sleep in No. 14 were distributed in these three, making them very crowded.